

stretched out their hands towards the tomb of the holy man and mumbled some kind of prayer. They then continued their journey in silence. The village lies at a short distance; a house had been made ready for us and I decided to rest there for a day. Duwa is a prosperous settlement of about 100 houses with about 7,000 mou of tilled land and the possibility of increasing the field area still more. As in most of these mountain kishlaks, the population has plenty of cattle that graze in the mountains.

*December 15th.* We started at 7 this morning after spending a day and a half at Duwa. Badsuddin Khan and his nephew returned to Khotan to-day via Pialma. They accompanied me to the other side of the river with a crowd of the villagers, where a touching parting took place. The nephew was to have accompanied me to Karghalik, 5 days' journey further. Either they were tired of the journey or else they saw that no business was to be done, or there may have been some other reason, but in any case the nephew suddenly remembered in Duwa that he was to get married in a few days' time and had to leave me, so as not to be too late for his own wedding. Of course, there was nothing to be said in the face of so grave a reason. He is 18 and is to marry his aunt, who is 13. I have been exchanging interminable courtesies with his uncle ever since last night. He said he did not know how he could bear the pain of parting. The first few days are always very hard; he had grown so used to seeing me that he looked upon me almost as a member of his family. I did my best not to be outdone by him and the air in our room must have been thick with compliments. If his were as sincere as mine, he must feel as happy at present, alone with his nephew, as I do in my own company. However, yesterday he rendered me a last slight service, for without his gift for persuading his fellow-countrymen I should never have succeeded in inducing the mullah to part with the «täskir» of the Duwa mazar which must be old to judge by the mullah's resistance and his reluctance to sell it. It will be interesting to see how many of the others are genuine. It would also be interesting to see how much of the money I have paid gets into the hands of the mullah, for all payments have been made through Badsuddin Khan, and I am very much afraid that the mullahs have had to be content with a very modest share.

Our journey to-day was rather shorter than yesterday. The weather was cold and windy, but soon changed and grew so warm that I slung my fur over the saddle and rode in my coat. The road curves at first to the SW, W and NW along the steep bank of the river Chong darya, the fields and plain of Duwa Kishlak extending on both sides. In contrast to many other villages, the part of Duwa that I saw, at any rate, is built with the houses fairly close together and there are only a few dwellings in the fields. The Chong darya is fordable throughout practically the whole year. When it is in spate in the spring, it is sometimes impassable for two or three days. After following the river for an hour the road turns NE and leads into a narrow cleft in the high bank. We followed the zigzags of this cleft for about 5 minutes until we reached a level plain surrounded by mountains. The cleft can easily be made passable for wheeled vehicles. The plain very soon leads to the Kök Boinak (not Muinak) dawan, from which the road winds along a very narrow, dry river bed, Kochallik akhzy. Here there are a couple of steep slopes, though it should